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ABSTRACT

A program at American International College (Springfield, MA) and the local public school system allows student teachers to have practical classroom experience with special needs students. Orientation sessions are followed by ongoing instruction (demonstration by the cooperating teacher), participation by the practicum student in classroom teaching, and ongoing evaluation of the practicum experience. Scheduling, management, and assignment aspects are discussed. Among evaluation considerations noted are classroom organization, prescriptive teaching, teaching materials, classroom management techniques, and parent-teacher conferences. The program is seen to be beneficial to the classroom students, the practicum student, and the cooperating teacher. (CL)

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THE BENEFITS OF PRACTICUM STUDENTS IN THE SUBSTANTIALLY SEPARATE PROGRAM

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FOR THE NEXT FEW MINUTES, WE WILL REVIEW THE PRACTICUM PROGRAM BETWEEN THE SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL SYSTEM AND AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE. MY EXPERIENCE IN THIS PROGRAM HAS BEEN REWARDING.

STUDENTS, COOPERATING TEACHER AND CHILDREN, ALL BENEFIT IN A CAREFULLY MONITORED PRACTICUM PROGRAM. THE PRACTICUM STUDENT WILL BECOME A MORE PROFICIENT TEACHER HAVING HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO WORK DIRECTLY WITH SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN AND THE SPECIAL EDUCATOR. THE COOPERATING TEACHER WILL BENEFIT BECAUSE THE PRACTICUM STUDENT'S PRESENCE CAN HELP TO MAKE HER PROGRAM MORE EFFICIENT. THE CHILDREN BENEFIT FROM SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT DURING THE TIME THE PRACTICUM STUDENT IS PRESENT. IN MY CLASSROOM THE PRACTICUM STUDENT BECOMES A VERY IMPORTANT PART OF THE CHILDREN'S DAY-BY-DAY ROUTINE. THE STUDENT HELPS ME DO ONE-TO-ONE TUTORING IN ALL AREAS. THIS IS A BIG STEP TOWARD IMPROVING THE SELF-CONFIDENCE OF THESE CHILDREN. THE PRACTICUM STUDENT IS ALSO A MODEL FOR THE CLASS AND SERVES AS A TEACHER'S AIDE.

HISTORICALLY, THE STATUS OF THE PRACTICUM PROGRAM OFFERED BY AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE WITH THE COOPERATION OF TEACHERS IN SELECTED CLASSROOMS HAS MOVED FROM A LECTURE-OBSERVATION FORMAT TO A PROGRAM WHICH FOCUSES ON PROVIDING "HANDS-ON" EXPERIENCES FOR THE COLLEGE STUDENT.

PRIOR TO 1973, STUDENTS OBSERVED THE SPECIAL CLASSROOM FOR APPROXIMATELY ONE HOUR. LATER A PRESENTATION WAS GIVEN BY THE COOPERATING TEACHER

WHICH DETAILED THE EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES IN THE CLASSROOM. THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY A QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD. THIS BRIEF EXPOSURE COMPOSED THE EXTENT OF AN INTRODUCTION TO THE TMR SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM UNTIL THE STUDENTS WERE READY TO PRACTICE TEACH.

THE REMAINDER OF THE SEMESTER CONSISTED OF SIMILAR OBSERVATIONS IN PROGRAMS FOR THE EMOTIONALLY DISTURBED, EMR, PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED AND OTHER LEARNING DISABLED.

THE MASSACHUSETTS COMPREHENSIVE SPECIAL EDUCATION LAW 766 WAS PASSED IN 1972. THIS WAS THE MOST OBVIOUS TURNING POINT FOR ALL OF OUR SPECIAL PROGRAMS. UNDER 766 THE PROGRAM FOR TMR CHILDREN, IS CLASSIFIED AS A SUBSTANTIALLY SEPARATE PROGRAM. IT SERVES THE CHILDREN WHO CANNOT BE MAINSTREAMED. THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF CHILDREN PER TEACHER IS EIGHT (8) WITHOUT AN AIDE OR TWELVE (12) CHILDREN WITH AN AIDE. THERE CAN BE NO GREATER DISCREPANCY IN THE CHILDREN'S AGES THAN THIRTY-SIX (36) MONTHS AND THE CHILDREN CANNOT REMAIN WITH THE SAME TEACHER LONGER THAN (3) YEARS. THE INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PLANS (IEPS) OF THE CHILDREN INDICATE THEIR PRESENT LEVEL OF ABILITIES AND ANY SPECIAL SERVICES THEY NEED, SUCH AS SPEECH OR AUDIO OR VISUAL THERAPY. THE LENGTH OF THE PROGRAM IS THE SAME AS THE REGULAR SCHOOL DAY AND SCHOOL YEAR.

CURRENTLY, THE PRACTICUM PROGRAM OFFERS THE STUDENT AN OPPORTUNITY TO WORK IN A SUBSTANTIALLY SEPARATE CLASSROOM FOR FOURTEEN (14) WEEKS, THREE HOURS PER WEEK. THIS IS FORTY-TWO (42) HOURS TO OBSERVE, PARTICIPATE AND LEARN IN THE SPECIAL EDUCATION CLASSROOM. THE PARTICULAR TIME OF ATTENDANCE IS ARRANGED WITH THE TEACHER OF THE

CLASS TO BE MOST BENEFICIAL TO THE CHILDREN, USEFUL TO THE TEACHER, AND CONVENIENT TO THE STUDENT'S ACADEMIC SCHEDULE. NOT MORE THAN TWO STUDENTS ARE IN ATTENDANCE AT THE SAME TIME.

IT HAS BEEN FOUND THAT THE BEHAVIOR OF THE CHILDREN CHANGES WITH MORE STUDENTS PRESENT. THE SHY WILL WITHDRAW, THE MORE OUTGOING WILL COMPETE FOR ATTENTION. THE TEACHER MAY DEMONSTRATE A LESSON, BUT THE RESPONSE WILL NOT BE TYPICAL OF THE REGULAR ROUTINE AND WE WISH THE SETTING TO BE TYPICAL FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE ATTENDING STUDENT.

THE GOALS OF THE AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE PROGRAM ARE:

TO ENABLE THE STUDENTS TO WORK DIRECTLY WITH SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN AND THE SPECIAL EDUCATOR WHO CAN PROVIDE IMMEDIATE DIRECTION AND GUIDANCE.

AND TO PROVIDE A PROGRAM LEADING TO MASSACHUSETTS CERTIFICATION AS A SPECIAL NEEDS TEACHER.

THE SCHEDULE OF THE PRACTICUM PROGRAM IN MY CLASSROOM CONSISTS OF FOUR ELEMENTS:

1. A PERIOD OF <u>ORIENTATION</u> WHICH INCLUDES AN OVERVIEW OF METHODS AND MATERIALS BEING USED AND GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH CHILDREN.

2. INSTRUCTION, AN ONGOING PROCESS WHOSE PRIME METHOD CENTERS UPON DEMONSTRATION BY THE COOPERATING TEACHER.

3. PARTICIPATION OF THE PRACTICUM STUDENT IN THE VARIOUS AREAS OF TEACHING.

4. EVALUATION ALSO AN ONGOING PROCESS, THROUGH STUDENT-TEACHER "MINI-CONFERENCES", DAILY STUDENT SELF-EVALUATION IN A JOURNAL AND MID-TERM AND END OF THE SEMESTER CONFERENCES WITH THE COLLEGE SUPERVISOR. THE TEACHER WRITES ONE EVALUATION USING A CHECK LIST AND COMMENTS AT THE END OF THE SEMESTER.

THE FIRST TWO CLASS MEETINGS OF THE SEMESTER ARE ORIENTATION PERIODS FOR THE STUDENT AND CHILDREN, - A TIME TO BECOME ACQUAINTED. WE TALK OF EDUCATING THE PUBLIC TO ACCEPT THESE CHILDREN, BUT VERY LITTLE IS SAID OF THE CHILDREN ACCEPTING THE PUBLIC. IN MOST CASES OBSERVED IN THIS CLASSROOM THE CHILDREN HOLD BACK TO SEE AND JUDGE THE BOLDER CHILD'S ACTIONS WHEN A STRANGER ENTERS THE ROOM. THE CHILDREN HAVE BEEN STARED AT WITH QUESTIONS, TALKED ABOUT, TEASED OR SCORNED ENOUGH IN THEIR SHORT LIVES TO MAKE THEM WARY OF STRANGERS. THE COLLEGE STUDEN IS TO JOIN IN ANY ACTIVITIES GOING ON TO HELP ALLEVIATE TENSIONS CAUSED BY HIS/HER PRESENCE.

A GENERAL OUTLINE OF PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IS DISCUSSED WITH THE STUDENT BUT THE DETAILS ARE RESERVED FOR INCORPORATION WITH A LESSON PLAN WHICH WILL BE OUTLINED LATER. THE BASIS FOR

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION IS DISCUSSED ALSO AND THE AREAS OF COMPETENCY IN WHICH THE STUDENT IS TO BECOME EXPERIENCED IS PRESENTED. (YOU WILL FIND A COPY OF THIS IN THE HANDOUTS YOU RECEIVE AT THE END OF THESE DISCUSSIONS.) THE STUDENT RECEIVES AN INFORMAL QUESTIONNAIRE THAT GIVES SOME INDICATION OF SPECIAL ABILITIES AND ATTITUDES OF THE STUDENT TEACHER. THE ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE PRACTICUM ARE BASED UPON THE NEEDS OF THE CHILDREN AND EMPHASIZE THE ABILITIES OF THE PRACTICUM STUDENT. THE SAME QUESTIONNAIRE WILL BE USED ONCE MORE AT THE END OF THE SEMESTER FOR COMPARISON WITH FIRST. IN A STUDENT-TEACHER CONFERENCE THIS COMPARISON CAN BE USED TO EVALUATE THE EFFECT OF THE PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE UPON THE STUDENT.

WITH THIS QUESTIONNAIRE, THE COOPERATING TEACHER CAN DETERMINE TO WHAT DEGREE THE STUDENT PERCEIVES THE ABILITIES AND NEEDS OF THE CHILDREN. DOES THE STUDENT UNDERSTAND THE REASONS FOR THE DIVISION OF ACTIVITIES IN A GROUP LESSON? IS THE STUDENT CREATIVE AND RESOURCEFUL? ARE IDEAS FOR USE OF MATERIALS OFFERED? AND FINALLY, DOES THE PERSONAL COMMENT GIVE A CLUE TO THE STUDENT'S BASIC ATTITUDE TOWARDS THESE CHILDREN? WHERE DOES THE STUDENT FEEL INADEQUATE?

A PERIOD OF INSTRUCTION INCLUDES A THOROUGH REVIEW OF THE CLASS SCHEDULE AND THE DETAILS OF THE LESSON PLAN. MY BASIC LESSON PLAN GREW OUT OF THE NECESSITY TO PREPARE PLANS FOR INDIVIDUAL NEEDS AND FROM THE LACK OF TIME TO DO EVERYTHING. (YOU WILL FIND A COPY OF THIS PLAN IN THE HANDOUTS.) BEGINNING WITH THE FORMAT USED IN A STANDARD LESSON PLAN

BOOK OF DIVIDING THE PAGES INTO FIVE EQUAL SECTIONS FOR THE DAYS OF THE SCHOOL WEEK, A SPACE FOR PERIODS OF THE DAY AND A SPACE FOR NOTES,THE SKELETAL OUTLINE OF OUR DAILY ROUTINE IS TYPED IN, ALLOWING SPACE FOR WRITING IN ACTIVITIES AND SOURCES OF MATERIALS TO BE USED. THESE TYPED PAGES ARE THEN COPIED (XEROXED OR DITTOED) TO SUPPLY ME WITH A PLAN BOOK FOR THE YEAR AND HANDOUTS FOR THE STUDENTS. I WAIT UNTIL OCTOBER TO TYPE AND COPY MY PLAN SO THAT MAJOR CHANGES IN SCHOOL POLICIES, TRANSFERS OF CHILDREN OR CHANGES OF IN-BUILDING SCHEDULES WILL USUALLY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY THIS TIME. FOR THE REST OF THE YEAR I CAN LIST THE CHILDREN IN GROUPS AND EASILY ASSIGN THEM TO ACTIVITIES AT THE ALLOTTED TIMES. THE CHILDREN'S INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENTS ARE WRITTEN ON INDEX CARDS AND STAPLED TO THEIR WORKBOOKS OR TAPED INSIDE THEIR DESKS. AS THE WORK IS ACCOMPLISHE THE TEACHER CHECKS IT OFF THE CARD. HAVING THE BASIC ROUTINE ALREADY COPIED SAVES A LOT OF WRITING TIME EACH WEEK, AND HAVING THE INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENTS WHERE THE CHILD CAN SEE THEM BEING CROSSED OFF IS A GOOD MOTIVATOR. THIS SYSTEM ALSO GIVES FLEXIBILITY TO THE SCHEDULE, FOR IF A CHILD IS ABSENT HE WILL BE ABLE, UPON HIS RETURN TO SCHOOL, TO BEGIN HIS WORK WITHOUT A NEED FOR THE TEACHER SEARCHING THE PLAN BOOK FOR THE AREA FOR REVIEW AND A NEW BEGINNING.

THE PRACTICUM STUDENT'S SCHEDULE IS COORDINATED BY INDIVIDUAL ASSIGN-MENTS WRITTEN ON INDEX CARDS THAT ARE PLACED WITH THE LESSON PLAN FOR THE WEEK. THE STUDENT IS GIVEN A COPY OF THE BASIC DAILY LESSON

PLAN, TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH WHAT WILL BE HAPPENING WHEN IN ATTENDANCE.

SPECIALISTS, SUCH AS SPEECH THERAPISTS AND OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS, MOVE IN AND OUT OF THE CLASSROOM WITHOUT DISRUPTING OUR ACTIVITIES. THE PRACTICUM STUDENTS ALSO BECOME A PART OF THIS TRAFFIC FLOW AND, IN MOST CASES, SOON BECOME A PARAPROFESSIONAL MEMBER OF THE TEAM SERVING THE NEEDS OF THE CHILDREN.

ONE OF THE DRAWBACKS FOR PRACTICUM STUDENTS IN ATTENDANCE ONLY AT SPECIFIC TIMES IS THAT THEY DO NOT GET THE ENTIRE VIEW OF A FULL DAY. THE MORNING PART OF MY PROGRAM IS VERY STRUCTURED WHEN THE CHILDREN ARE RESTED AND MORE ALERT. AFTER LUNCH THE CHILDREN HAVE FREE TIME TO CHOOSE TO PLAY GAMES OR RECORDS, OR READ LIBRARY BOOKS AND THE REST OF THE DAY'S ACTIVITIES ARE RELAXED AND FREE-FLOWING. A COLLEGE STUDENT WHO HAS ONLY ATTENDED IN THE MORNING HAS LITTLE IDEA OF THE BEHAVIOR OF THESE CHILDREN IN AN OPEN SOCIALIZING ATMOSPHERE. NOR DOES THE STUDENT ATTENDING ONLY IN THE AFTERNOON TOTALLY APPRECIATE THAT THE CHILDREN CAN SIT STILL AND BE ATTENTIVE. THE PRACTICUM STUDENTS OFTEN MISS THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE THESE CHILDREN INTERACTING WITH CHILDREN FROM OTHER CLASSES IN THE BUILDING. WHEN A CHILD HAS THE MOTOR DEVELOPMENT TO BE MAINSTREAMED INTO PHYSICAL EDUCATION WITH REGULAR CLASSES I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO DO SO. I HAVE HAD CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN VARIOUS PHASES OF THE ENTIRE SCHOOL PROGRAM. CHILDREN FROM REGULAR CLASSES ATTEND MY CLASS IN THE AFTERNOON FOR HANDICRAFTS AND TO VISIT WITH MY CHILDREN. ALL OF THESE

ACTIVITIES ARE WORTH OBSERVING. THEREFORE ARRANGEMENTS ARE MADE FOR PRACTICUM STUDENTS TO SPEND TIME AND GET A VIEW OF AN ENTIRE DAY IN THE LIFE OF MY CLASSROOM.

AFTER THE ORIENTATION PERIOD MOST STUDENTS COME TO THE ROOM WITH ENTHUSIASM, GET THEIR ASSIGNMENT CARDS FROM THE PLAN BOOK AND GO TO WORK. I AM CAREFUL TO REGULARLY ASSIGN DIFFERENT CHILDREN TO EACH STUDENT FOR TUTORING AND TO GIVE AMPLE OPPORTUNITY FOR GROUP TEACHING. AN ASSIGNMENT CARD MAY READ: MISS ANN W/LISA, 2 PAGES IN REBUS. (REMEMBER LISA HAS HER CARD ON HER WORKBOOK SO THERE SHOULD BE NO PROBLEM FINDING THE PROPER PLACE TO WORK). OR THE CARD MAY BE A GROUP ASSIGNMENT: MISS ANN W/GROUP 10:15 PLDK LESSON 23A (TRANSLATION: GET THE MATERIALS FROM THE PEABODY LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT KIT AND TAKE OVER THE 10:15 SPEECH LESSON). OPPORTUNITIES TO OBSERVE OUR SPECIALISTS ARE PROVIDED AND ASSIGNMENTS ARE MADE FOR TUTORING TO REINFORCE THEIR LESSONS.

WHEN THE STUDENT IS NOT TUTORING OR TEACHING A GROUP HE/SHE IS ACTING AS A TEACHER'S AIDE IN ANY AREA NEEDED. I HAVE FOUND THE PRACTICUM STUDENTS WANT TO BE ACTIVE, SO I TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF THIS. THEY HELP WITH BULLETIN BOARDS, ASSEMBLING OR PUTTING AWAY EQUIPMENT, RUNNING THE AUDIO-VISUAL EQUIPMENT-INCIDENTALLY TEACHING THOSE WHO WILL BE ABLE TO OPERATE THE PROJECTOR. IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION THE STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE THE CALESTHENICS AND HELP ANALYSE THE MANEUVERS. THEY PLAY GAMES, RUN THE PUPPET THEATRE AND PLAN PARTIES. THE CHILDREN ARE HELPED IN THE BATHROOM, UP AND DOWN STAIRS, IN THE

LIBRARY, IN THE LUNCHROOM, AND WHEN WE GO ON OCCASIONAL FIELD TRIPS. THE STUDENTS ARE ALSO HELPFUL DOING CLERICAL WORK SUCH AS COPYING CHARTS AND MAKING DITTO MASTERS.

EVALUATION OF THE PRACTICUM'S PERFORMANCE IS DONE ON A DAILY, MID-TERM AND END OF SEMESTER BASIS. THE PRACTICUM STUDENT IS TO KEEP A DAILY LOG TO EVALUATE SELF-GROWTH AND A CRITIQUE OF THE PROGRAM. AT THE SAME TIME WE HAVE "MINI-CONFERENCES". THE AMOUNT OF TIME TO BE GIVEN TO THE STUDENTS IS LIMITED, SO DURING QUIET ACTIVITY PERIODS OR LULLS BETWEEN ACTIVITIES I CONFER WITH THEM ABOUT HOW A LESSON WENT, HOW THE CHILDREN RESPONDED AND WHAT MIGHT BE CHANGED AND WHY.

THE CHILDREN ACCEPT THESE DISCUSSIONS AND QUITE OFTEN ARE ASKED TO PARTICIPATE BY HELPING TO DEMONSTRATE USE OF MATERIALS OR OTHER ASPECTS OF THE CLASSROOM ROUTINE. TO BRING THE PRACTICUM STUDENTS INTO A PROFESSIONAL ATMOSPHERE THEY ARE ADDRESSED AS MR., MISS OR MS. I HAVE FOUND THAT IF THE CHILDREN ADDRESS THEM ON A FIRST NAME BASIS THEY SOON TREAT THEM AS CAMP COUNCILORS WHO ARE THERE FOR PLAY. THE TITLES ALSO SERVE THE PRACTICUM STUDENTS AS GENTLE REMINDERS THAT THEIR GOALS ARE TO BECOME PROFESSIONALS AND TO SERVE, JUDICIOUSLY, THE NEEDS OF THESE CHILDREN.

AT MID-TERM, THE STUDENT HAS A CONFERENCE WITH THE COLLEGE SUPERVISOR. AT THIS TIME, THE DAILY LOG IS REVIEWED AND THE STUDENT'S EVALUATION OF THE PRACTICUM IS GIVEN. THIS INCLUDES THE STUDENT'S FEELINGS ABOUT

TEACHING IN THIS CLASSROOM AND WORKING WITH THE CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS.

ONE CHANGE OF ATTITUDE I HAVE FOUND CONSISTENTLY IN THE STUDENTS IS THE CHANGE OF EXPECTATIONS THEY HAVE FOR THE CHILDREN'S ABILITIES. ALMOST ALL OF THEM HAVE UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS AT FIRST. AS THE SEMESTER PROGRESSES AND THEY GET TO KNOW THE CHILDREN AND THEIR CAPABILITIES, THE STUDENTS BEGIN TO ADOPT A TEACHING STYLE THAT REFLECTS A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE CHILDREN'S NEEDS.

AT THE END OF THE SEMESTER THE TEACHER, USING A FIVE POINT SCALE, FROM POOR TO EXCELLENT, EVALUATES THE STUDENT'S PERFORMANCE. THIS FINAL EVALUATION PLUS THE STUDENT'S DAILY JOURNAL COVER THE AREAS OF PERFORMANCE THAT WERE DISCUSSED DURING ORIENTATION AND ARE THE BASIS FOR THE STUDENT'S FINAL GRADE.

THE AREAS OF PERFORMANCE EMPHASIZED FOR THE BASES OF EVALUATION ARE: <u>IN-BUILDING PROCEDURES</u> SUCH AS STAFF MEETINGS AND FIRE AND CIVIL DEFENSE DRILLS.

<u>CLASSROOM ORGANIZATION</u> INCLUDING THE LESSON PLAN AND ADAPTATIONS AND ALTERATIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENT TO ACCOMMODATE THE NEEDS OF THE CHILDREN.

<u>PRESCRIPTIVE TEACHING</u> DESCRIBED BY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE IEPS BASED ON THE DIAGNOSES OF DISABILITIES.

Teaching Materials and how they are selected and possibly modified for specific uses.

Classroom Management Techniques such as Contracts and Behavior Modification.

Parent-Teacher Conferences developing rapport with the childrens' parents and recording the meetings.

Special Services as provided by auxiliary personnel in speech, adaptive physical education, and other areas of need and working with councilors, social workers and medical people.

The success of the program is based upon:

1. Flexibility of a lesson plan that accommodates the student's varying attendance schedules.

2. Opportunities offered the students to participate in all aspects of the classroom program and

3. Continuous evaluation by the teacher during all phases of the program.

Success can be accomplished when the student's academic background provides a basic knowledge of the characterisitcs of the TMR child,

WHEN THERE IS SUFFICIENT COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SUPERVISOR, TEACHER AND STUDENT AND WHEN A RELIABLE EVALUATION TOOL OF THE STUDENT'S PERFORMANCE AND OF THE PROGRAM IS OFFERED THE STUDENT AND ADMINISTRATORS

IN CONCLUSION, THE PROGRAM OF A WELL MONITORED PRACTICUM IN THE SUBSTANTIALLY SEPARATE CLASSROOM IS A BENEFIT TO THE STUDENT, THE COOPERATING TEACHER AND THE PUPILS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS. THE PRACTICUM STUDENT DEVELOPS A PERSONAL WORKING PHILOSOPHY BY DIRECT SERVICE TO SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN, BY OBSERVING SPECIALISTS IN SUCH AREAS AS SPEECH, AUDIO AND VISUAL THERAPY, AND USING THE METHODS AND MATERIALS PRESCRIBED FOR THIS CLASSROOM. THE COOPERATING TEACHER IS ASSISTED IN REINFORCING LESSONS, BEING RELIEVED OF SOME NON-INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES TO MAKE MORE TIME FOR TESTING AND ASSESSING THE CHILDREN'S PROGRESS AND HAVING MORE AVAILABLE TIME FOR PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES AND STAFF CONFERENCES.

AND MOST IMPORTANT, THE BENEFITS TO THE SPECIAL NEEDS CHILD ARE INVALUABLE AS SEEN IN THEIR PERSONALITY GROWTH. THEY ARE GIVEN THE CHANCE TO DEVELOP CLOSER RELATIONSHIPS WITH MORE PEOPLE HEIGHTENING THEIR SOCIAL AWARENESS. THE PRACTICUM STUDENTS ARE MODELS FROM WHOM THEY LEARN SELF-HELP ACTIVITIES LEADING TO MORE INDEPENDENCE AND A BETTER SELF IMAGE. THEY DEVELOP CONSIDERATION OF OTHERS AND AWARENESS OF SELF.

AS THIS PROGRAM CONTINUES TO DEVELOP AND IMPROVE, IT WILL BECOME A MAJOR BENEFIT NOT ONLY TO THE STUDENT-TEACHER-CHILD GROUP BUT TO THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM OF ANY COMMUNITY.

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